

First record of brown colour aberration in Red-Vented Bulbul from Assam

Numerous animal species are widely recognized to exhibit hereditary colour anomalies, including albinism and leucism (Dutta et al. 2021), especially in birds. Plumage colouration generally arises from a combination of biological pigments (biochromes), structural colour, or sometimes a blend of both factors. Melanins and carotenoids, being the two primary pigments, play a decisive role in determining the plumage colour of birds. van Grouw (2013) stated that the prevalent heritable aberrations observed in wild birds encompass a range of characteristics, including albinism, leucism, brown mutations, dilution and melanism. Identifying color mutations in natural settings can pose considerable challenges, often proving to be exceedingly difficult and not always possible (Mahabal et al. 2016).

In India, few documented cases of 'brown' colour aberration or their genetics has been



Red-vented Bulbuls *Pycnonotus cafer* from Kamrup, Assam, India. © Ritu Kalita.

reported. Those records are Soni (1992), Joshua (1996), Pande et al. (2003), Ghose & Khan (2005), and Mestri et al. (2011), but not in Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* from Assam, India.

During a bird survey conducted on 27 April 2023, at Saru Tezpur Village (26.0786 N, 91.4654 E) of Kamrup District, Assam, a remarkable sighting took place. At approximately 1540 h, a pair of Red-vented

Bulbuls *Pycnonotus cafer* was observed resting near a paddy field. Upon capturing photographs of the pair, it became evident that one of the individuals exhibited extraordinary body colouration. The typically brown colouration on the black parts and the white colouration on the brown parts, together with the normally colored eyes and beak, indicate that this is a 'brown' type of colour aberration.

References

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- Monish Kumar Thapa¹, Ritu Kalita² & Hirak Jyoti Das³**
- ¹ Wildlife Science Course, Department of Zoology, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam 781014, India.
- ^{2&3} Assam Wildlife Rescue and Research Organization (AWRRO), Bihpuria, Lakhimpur, Assam 784161, India. Emails: ¹monish.awrro@gmail.com (corresponding author), ²ritu.awrro@gmail.com, ³hirakjyoti.awrro@gmail.com
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